



***MINUTES OF THE ONE-HUNDRED-AND-NINETY-FIRST
MEETING OF THE MERIT BOARD – February 11, 2014***

State Universities Civil Service System Office

1717 Philo Road, Suite 24

Urbana, Illinois 61802

&

(Video Conference)

University of Illinois at Chicago

College of Pharmacy

Room 270

833 South Wood Street

Chicago, Illinois

&

(Video Conference)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Morris Library

Conference Room, 1st Floor

605 Agricultural Drive

Carbondale, IL

Ms. Hasara called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members present at the primary meeting location were: Karen Hasara, representing the University of Illinois; Betty Kinser, representing Illinois State University; and Robert T. Marshall, Jr., representing Northern Illinois University.

Members present at the Chicago videoconference location were: Lyneir Cole, representing Western Illinois University and Brian Mitchell, representing Governors State University.

Member present by audio conference was: Robert D. Webb, representing Eastern Illinois University.

Members absent were: Marvin Garcia, representing Northeastern Illinois University; Patricia Brown Holmes, representing the University of Illinois; Spencer Leak Sr., representing Chicago

State University, Donna Manering, representing Southern Illinois University, and James D. Montgomery, representing the University of Illinois.

Also present were: Lewis T. (Tom) Morelock, Executive Director; Mari Martinelli, Manager, Legal Services and Legal Counsel; Teresa Rademacher, Secretary for the Merit Board; and Andy Small, Chair of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee. Various other university employees and University System office staff were also in attendance.

Since a quorum of six (6) Merit Board members were not present at the University System office and the video conference sites, the Merit Board was unable to take formal action on any agenda items.

Public Comments

The Merit Board heard comments from Professor Roy Campbell, on behalf of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Senate Executive Committee. Professor Campbell shared his concerns regarding Exemption Authority at the university level and the audit process with the larger number of positions being audited. Professor Campbell also stated that he was concerned that no faculty or board member from any university had been included in the Stakeholders Group Meetings that had been suggested by the Merit Board to discuss the exemption authority. He further stated that a representative from the Illinois Board of Higher Education had also recommended to be a part of this group, but that no invitation to the group meetings has ever occurred.

Mr. Morelock stated that he has offered to meet with the Executive Senate Group and the Illinois Board of Higher Education group to discuss this topic either privately or in an open meeting setting, but had received no response from either group. Mr. Morelock also stated that the Stakeholder Group had not met since last Fall which was prior to the request to add new members. Mr. Morelock further explained that the meetings had not been productive and that interest from some of the parties involved had waned regarding future meeting dates. Mr. Morelock also spoke about the audit process and explained that the sample size of an audit depends heavily on previous audit findings. Mr. Morelock stated that he intends to contact Professor Campbell in the upcoming weeks to schedule a meeting to discuss concerns.

Dr. Webb asked Mr. Morelock if he felt Professor Campbell's concerns stemmed from a misunderstanding of the rules and regulations, or if the comments stem from a disagreement regarding the rules. Mr. Morelock stated that he intends to explore this issue in his meeting with Professor Campbell.

Mr. Cole also posed a few questions concerning Western Illinois University's audit regarding exemption authority.

Report of the Administrative Advisory Committee – Tom Morelock

The Merit Board heard a report from Mr. Morelock regarding the Administrative Advisory Committee. The committee last met on February 4, 2014. He reported that it had been around a year since the committee's last meeting. The committee discussed many updates, as well as discussing historical account discharge activities, "Return to Work" legislation, as well as the classification plan and legal update.

Report of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee – Andy Small, Chair

The Merit Board heard a report from Andy Small, Chair of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee. Mr. Small reported that the committee had several concerns with the pension system, rules and regulations, pending court cases, and the outcome of pending legislation. Mr. Small also stated that the committee is concerned with the exemption and audit process. He indicated that it is important that employees get classified correctly in the University System, whether it be civil service or as Academic Professional. Mr. Small also stated that the committee is concerned with the attendance of Merit Board Members at meetings and that it is very important that the Merit Board have a quorum at meetings so that official business, namely discharge cases and Director's Review Decisions, can be handled as efficiently and timely as possible.

Report of the Human Resource Directors Advisory Committee – Maureen Parks

The Merit Board heard a report from Maureen Parks, representative of the Human Resource Directors Advisory Committee. Ms. Parks stated that the Human Resource Advisory Committee met with the University System office on January 31 and prior to that in November, 2013. She stated that Mr. Morelock had shared with the committee that the University System office would be working on updating sections of various procedures manuals and that the committee is looking forward to seeing the proposed changes to determine if they will address some of the concerns the HR directors have identified in discussions with the University System. She informed the Merit Board that the HR Directors were conducting a survey regarding the kinds of improvements or changes that they would recommend to various Civil Service Procedures. The committee is looking forward to sharing the results with the University System office.

Ms. Parks stated that the HR Directors do not support the removal of the exemption authority from the university level. She further stated that the committee looks forward to future meetings to continue progress on these topics and that Mr. Morelock has offered to share a tool to assist in the audit process regarding the classifying of employees.

Consideration of the 2014 Schedule of Meetings of the Merit Board

Mr. Morelock informed the Merit Board that due to not having a quorum to take action on any of the agenda items, the University System office would be scheduling a meeting for the second week in March. The University System office will be in contact with each Merit Board member to confirm a date.

Biennial Audit Program – Review of Recent Activities

Mr. Morelock updated the Merit Board on the Final Audit Reports that had been released since the last Merit Board meeting. The following audits have been completed and are posted on the University System office website:

- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois Community College Board
- Division of Specialized Care for Children

A copy of the audit schedule was also provided in the agenda materials.

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Morelock provided an agency report which included the following items:

- Update on the “Return to Work” legislation regarding work limitations for SURS Annuitants – The Merit Board was updated on the legislation regarding the exception to the 40% threshold and financial consequences if the retiree’s position is governed by the State Universities Civil Service Act (110 ILCS 70).
- FY 2013 Annual Report – In compliance with section 70/36d(13) of the State Universities Civil Service Act (110 ILCS 70/36d(13)), the 62nd Annual Report of the State Universities Civil Service System was mailed to the Governor on October 28, 2013 and also mailed to the Merit Board member on October 30, 2013.
- Compliance audit by the Auditor General’s office – Staff from the Auditor General’s office was on-site April 29 and 30 and May 1, 2013 for our agency’s biennial compliance audit for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. Additional activities were conducted to further collect information after the end of the FY 2013 fiscal year. The Final Agency Audit Report was released on December 19, 2013. There were no material findings listed. A copy of the report was included in the agenda materials and can also be found at the Auditor General’s website.

- FY 2014 and FY 2015 Budget Updates – Current year-to-date expenditures/obligations for FY 2014 are at the 90% level. Currently in the legislative process for the FY 2014 budget.
- Classification/Examination Update – The Merit Board was updated on several revisions to the various class specifications and examinations.
- University/Agency Visits – The Merit Board was updated on various university and agency visits by the University System office.

Report of Legal Counsel – Mari Martinelli, Manager, Legal Services and Legal Counsel

Ms. Martinelli updated the Merit Board on some outstanding legal matters. Thus far in FY 2014 there have been 25 Written Charges for Discharge served on employees at the various universities and agencies. Three employees have requested a hearing.

Ms. Martinelli further updated the Merit Board regarding an administrative review case – Ramakrishnan vs. University Civil Service Merit Board et. al. This was a discharge case where the Merit Board dismissed all charges and reinstated the employee at Northern Illinois University (NIU). NIU appealed the case to the circuit court for administrative review; the case was later dropped by NIU. This case was dismissed with prejudice by the circuit court.

Other Items as Presented

Ms. Hasara stated that Merit Board members will wait to hear from the University System office regarding the scheduling of the next meeting of the Merit Board during the second week in March. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Teresa M. Rademacher

Teresa M. Rademacher
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

/s/ James Montgomery
University Civil Service Merit Board

March 11, 2014
Date

